

Dear Parents and Carers,

Between the 12th and 16th February Bury's SEND services were inspected by the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted. The inspection team identified widespread, systemic failings in services in Bury and highlighted the challenge that we as a partnership know and have heard from our parents – we need to do more to improve the outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs.

On behalf of Bury Council and Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board we apologise for these failings and would also like to apologise for the miscommunication of our original letter to parents and carers. It is deeply disappointing that current services do not meet the needs of our children and we are committed to changing this. A large part of our work must be to regain your trust and to do this, we will continue to host engagement events, organised alongside BURY2GETHER to consult and engage with parents and carers.

The challenges we face are considerable, with an increasing number of children with special educational needs requiring support and increasing costs in delivering services. This has created issues in waiting times and in delivering our services and has also created a significant financial gap that we must also solve, to ensure that we do not have further issues in the future. To achieve this, we are being supported by the Department for Education's Safety Valve programme (PSV), supporting investment in our local system that will enable us to deliver the right services and support to our children, in a sustainable way.

We have worked hard with BURY2GETHER parent/carer forum and our partners to develop the Priority Action Plan for the Bury's SEND services. An important part of the plan is that a new Improvement Board has been set up. It will include all key strategic partners, including, BURY2GETHER. It will be led by someone who is independent and with senior leadership experience of Special Educational Needs and Disability Services.

Both our Priority Action Plan and the Safety Valve programme have one clear ambition: to ensure that we use the resources we have, to best meet the needs of our children with special educational needs. We will ensure that you understand both these programmes moving forward and have timely updates on progress.

This is not the start of the journey, and along with the support of our schools, parents, carers and partner organisations such as BURY2GETHER, we have begun to make improvements for the future such as building brand new Special Schools and creating more places for children with

special educational needs in existing schools, to ensure that we can support the children of Bury in Bury.

We know that many people have been frustrated by the slow and intermittent nature of change in Bury – our Priority Action Plan embodies our commitment to create real and permanent change for the better. But we know that we cannot do it alone. We will strive to make it as easy as possible for parents to have their say and will do everything we can to support parents to drive the change that they want to see – together we will build a better future.

\*Full report available here <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80443>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J Richards', written in a cursive style.

**Jeanette Richards, Executive Director of Children's Services**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. Blandamer', written in a cursive style.

**Will Blandamer, Executive Director, Health and Adult Care and Deputy Place Lead - NHS GM (Bury)**